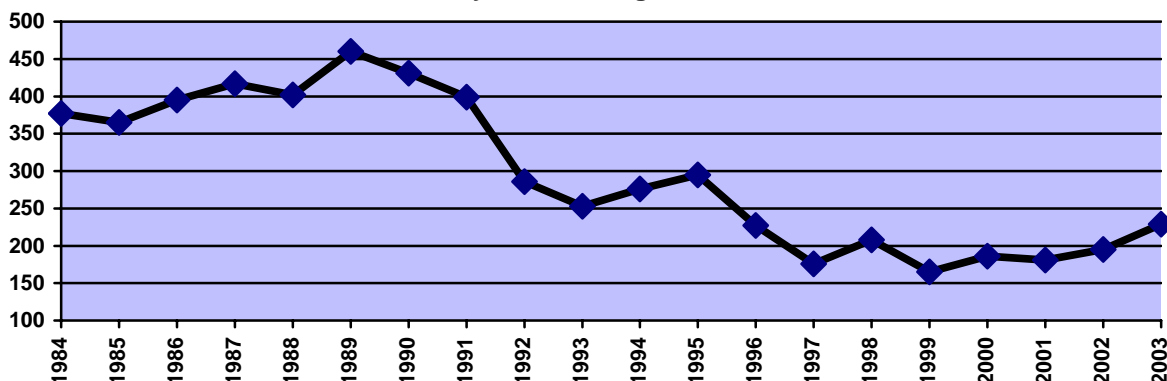


ROBBERY

Robbery is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This crime includes muggings, purse snatchings, and bank hold-ups.

**Twenty Year Review:
Robbery in Cambridge, 1984-2003**



195 reported in 2002 • 229 reported in 2003

Robberies are violent crimes in which suspects approach their target threatening to cause harm if the victim does not relinquish money. (In rare cases the suspects may demand drugs or other property from the victim.)

Robbery incidents are sometimes associated with the use of guns or knives, but may involve very little contact between the suspect and victim, and often result in no harm to the victim. Most robberies result in no injury, other than the loss of property, because most victims do not resist the suspect's demands.

Robbery is one of the most feared crimes because of its violent nature. This makes robbery one of the top crimes considered by residents when estimating the "safety" of an area.

In 2003 Cambridge experienced the highest increase in robberies since 1995. From 2002-2003, the robbery total increased by 17%, with street robberies showing a more significant increase.

Street robberies have a history of taking place during the nighttime, particularly after drinking establishments close, and in dark areas. Commercial incidents tend to occur early in the morning or late into the night.

In most cases victims do not know the suspect. Less than 10% of street robbery victims knew their assailant in 2003. Strangers were responsible for all the commercial robberies in 2003.

Robbery incidents are divided into two subcategories: commercial robbery and street robbery. An analysis of these individualized offenses follows.

	2002	2003	% Change
Commercial Robbery	40	41	+2%
Street Robbery	155	188	+21%
Total	195	229	+17%

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

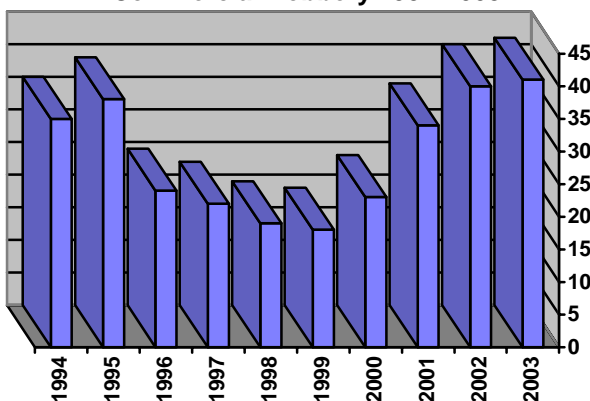
Commercial robbery describes the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care or custody of a commercial or financial establishment. Examples of this crime include the bank heist, the cab stick-up, and the convenience store hold-up.

From 1970-1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually. Since then, the number has plunged to 40% of that average. Nationally, commercial robbery accounts for 24 % of total robberies; in Cambridge, commercial robberies made up only 18% of the 2003 robbery total.

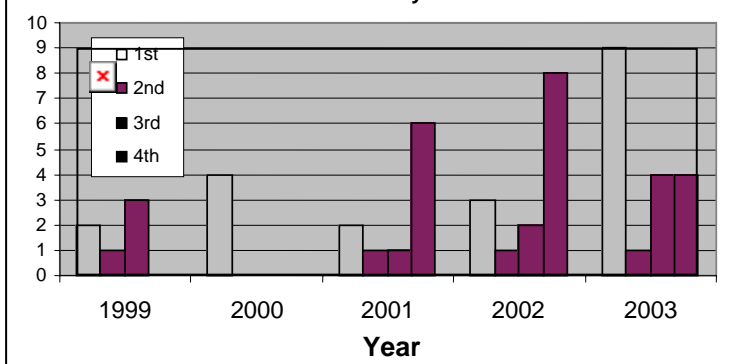
Commercial robberies rose in 2003 by 2% (one incident). While most types of commercial robberies declined, a significant increase was seen in bank robberies, convenience store/gas station robberies and drug store robberies. The business districts of 1500-1900 Massachusetts Avenue and Central Square incurred the most incidents.

Bank robberies increased by 26% in 2003. A high concentration of these incidents took place during January and

Commercial Robbery 1994-2003



Bank Robberies by Quarter



early February. Eight incidents occurred during this period. At the end of this period an arrest was made in Boston, which was followed by a cease in bank robberies until early March. The bank robbery arrests were the result of interagency cooperation involving the Federal Bureau of Investigations and local police departments. There were no reported bank robberies for the months of May, June and November. Bank robberies were concentrated around three time frames during bank business hours: around 9AM (near opening); 12PM (lunchtime); and 3PM (closing). The district

of 1500-1900 Massachusetts Avenue experienced the overall concentration of bank robberies for the year. Two arrests were made in Cambridge for the forty-one reported incidents.

There were four reported drug store robberies. Two of these incidents took place during the earlier part of the year, and involved the same suspect demanding oxycontin and percocet from the pharmacies. Another incident involved a man holding an employee at knifepoint and making demands, but the employee got loose and the man was arrested.

Robberies of gas stations (5) and convenience stores (6) increased in 2003. The convenience store incidents began in the summer, and resurged at the end of the year. Two of the December incidents in Inman Square involved a single suspect targeting the store on consecutive days at 2PM. There was no temporal pattern with these incidents.

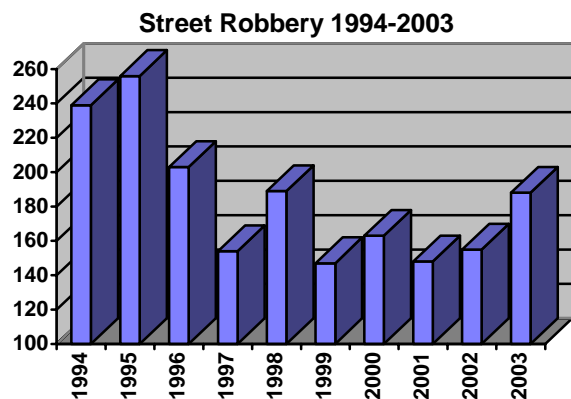
Commercial Robberies by Location Type

Type	2001	2002	2003
Bank/Armored Car	10	14	18
Bar/Restaurant	3	5	1
Cab	1	1	0
Café	0	0	1
Convenience/Gas	8	7	11
Drug Store	1	1	4
Fast Food	2	1	0
Hotel/Motel	1	1	0
Jewelry Store	0	2	0
Liquor Store	1	0	0
Misc. Retail	5	7	5
Parking Garage	2	1	1
Total	24	40	41

Gas station robberies did not result in an arrest in Cambridge, but a man was arrested outside of the city who was linked to at least two of the Cambridge gas station robberies and believed to be carrying out a string of robberies in Eastern Massachusetts. The Galleria/East Cambridge district was the only area in the city hit twice with these incidents, at the same location. Three of the incidents involved a masked assailant displaying a handgun, but no

injuries were reported in any of the incidents. Unlike convenience stores, gas station robberies tend to occur in the nighttime with concentrations around 9-10PM and again from 12-2AM.

STREET ROBBERY



“Street robbery” describes all robberies committed against individuals, as opposed to commercial establishments. Despite the name, a “street robbery” does not necessarily have to occur on the street, although more than 75% of them do. Examples of street robberies are “muggings,” “carjackings,” and “purse snatchings.”

There was a sharp rise in street robberies from 155 incidents in 2002 to 188 reports in 2003, a 21% increase. The 188 street robberies in Cambridge in 2003 represent the highest total for this target crime recorded in the City since 1998, when there were 189 incidents. Over the past decade, Cambridge has averaged 184 street robberies per year. The incline in street robbery in

2003 can be traced to increases in Cambridgeport and North Cambridge.

Cambridgeport: Street robberies in Cambridgeport increased from 15 incidents in 2002 to 39 in 2003, the highest total for this neighborhood since 1992. Over 50% of these robberies were concentrated in the first two blocks south of Central Square and in the 500 block of Massachusetts Avenue. Two distinct scenarios emerged in this area in 2003: Homeless preying upon homeless and strong arm robberies of weekend bar and club patrons. A more disturbing trend was the sporadic return of late night robberies in the 100-300 blocks of Pearl, Brookline and Magazine Streets. The majority of Cambridgeport street robberies occurred on weekend nights, Fridays and Saturdays, between 12AM and 1AM.

North Cambridge: Street robberies in this neighborhood increased by over 100%. Two out of every three street robberies in North Cambridge in 2003 were clustered along Rindge Ave between Russell Field and the Alewife Station. A high percentage of these incidents were intimidation robberies between young teens that had a

prior acquaintance. The 27 robberies here in 2003 represent the highest total for this neighborhood since 1997.

The other 11 neighborhoods in the City recorded a decrease in street robberies in 2003 or remained relatively unchanged from 2002.

Overall, street robbery incidents peaked during the first three months of the year, when incidents more than doubled from the 2002 reported robberies. After a series of violent incidents in Area 4 in mid-January, preventive investigations and patrol strategies were implemented. After nearly a month of high visibility patrol and plainclothes surveillance, two major arrests were made on Valentine’s Day weekend,

eradicating two significant patterns. Throughout the city incidents were highest on Saturdays, during two distinct time frames: 6-8PM and 12-1AM. Further temporal analysis indicates that Tuesday and Thursday

robberies are concentrated around 2-5PM, near or at the end of the workday.

** Please note that in 2003, two street robberies occurred in which the location was reported as “unknown.” They are not included in this breakdown.*

robberies are concentrated around 2-5PM, near or at the end of the workday.

Thirty-one street robberies resulted in 55 arrests in 2003. One of the most significant arrests involved two street robberies in the Peabody neighborhood, in which a youth stabbed the victim after money was relinquished, showing no concern for the money. The youth was arrested subsequent to a housebreak. Overall, only 35 of the arrestees

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF STREET ROBBERIES

AREA	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
East Cambridge	20	12	13	18	18
M.I.T. Area	1	2	4	0	6
Inman/Harrington	19	18	10	10	6
Area 4	38	36	25	30	31
Cambridgeport	24	27	28	15	39
Mid-Cambridge	6	18	18	18	16
Riverside	11	21	11	19	19
Agassiz	1	2	6	6	2
Peabody	8	8	12	8	9
West Cambridge	3	7	10	14	9
North Cambridge	14	9	9	12	27
Cambridge Highlands	1	1	0	1	1
Strawberry Hill	1	2	1	4	3

were Cambridge residents. Many of the other defendants were from Metro Boston and two hailed from Somerville. Victims were predominantly male in most age groups, except those victims 50 years of age or older, which involved an almost equal number of males as females. The most targeted age group was 18-25 year olds, in which approximately a third of the victims were females. In the age group of victims under 18, all but 2 of the victims were male.

A long-term trend analysis of street robberies in Cambridge reveals a number of frequently recurring scenarios. The number in parenthesis after the category indicates how frequently that categorization occurred in Cambridge this past year:

Acquaintance Robberies (13): Related to Domestic Robbery and Homeless Robbery (see below), Acquaintance Robberies are committed by someone the victim knows. Common scenarios include drinking buddies robbing each other after a night at the bar, friends turning on each other, drug disputes, and robberies between co-workers.

ATM Robberies (6): In this type of robbery, the suspect may approach the victim immediately after the victim withdraws money from an ATM and demanded him/her to hand over the cash, or the suspect may wait by the victim as he/she makes a transaction, then take the money directly from the ATM and run. An ATM robbery can also occur when a suspect(s) approach a victim on the street, threatens the victim by displaying or implying a weapon, and demands the victim go to an ATM and withdraw money for them.

Bully Boys (13): Juvenile robberies of intimidation. In most occurrences, the victim knows the perpetrators. Committed by and against school-aged youths, they occur on the way home from school, or at playgrounds, malls, parks, and skating rinks. Two to four juvenile males usually strong-arm their victim, stealing such things as his jacket, hat, or lunch money.

Carjacking (6): In this scenario, a lone predator approaches a victim entering or exiting his or her car, or when stopped at a traffic light. In no hesitant terms, the robber orders the victim out of the vehicle and demands the keys.

Dial-A-Victim (3): These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects who are usually brandishing a knife or gun intercept a delivery person before entering a phony location.

Domestic (4): This type of scenario occurs when someone close to the victim, like a family member, romantic partner or roommate, takes money from them by the use or threat of violence.

Drug Deal (2): Typically drug deals gone awry.

Homeless Robberies (3): These are incidents of homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and Harvard Squares, or at various shelters. The victim is usually acquainted with the perpetrator, and in many cases, both are intoxicated. Property stolen ranges from a bottle of wine to a blanket to a pair of shoes. Like domestic robberies, homeless robberies are sometimes precipitated by past debts, real or imaginary.

Pack Robberies (22): In this situation, a group of three to eight young males will stalk victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, and recreational areas. The majority of these robberies occur on Friday or Saturday nights, when the “pack” is returning from a dance or party. The robberies are not always premeditated, but the victim—typically a male between the ages of 15-25, walking alone—simply ends up on the wrong place at the wrong time. Weapons are seldom used, but strong-arm tactics are applied. Usually, the victim is knocked to the ground or ordered to lie down.

Predatory Robberies (91): This type of street robbery has the most pronounced effect on a citizen’s perception of safety. Predatory robberies are synonymous with “muggings.” In the typical scenario, one or two men approach the victim with knife or gun and demand cash. The danger of serious injury is constantly present. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

The crime analysis unit has divided the predatory robberies even further into “crude” and “professional” sub-categories.

“Crude” means that the robbers were edgy, unprepared, and unpredictable (62 incidents in 2003). In “professional” predatory robberies, the robbers are collected, efficient, and effective (29 incidents).

Purse Snatch (25): The purse-snatcher is generally unarmed, and has little intent to cause injury. After “casing” a victim—a female carrying a purse, bag, or wallet—this robber approaches quick from behind—on foot or on a bicycle—and snatches the item out of the victim’s hands or off her shoulder before she has a chance to react, often effecting a “body check” in the process.

PREVENTING STREET ROBBERY

- Try to avoid walking alone on the street after dark. If you must walk alone at night, use well-lit roads, with as much car traffic as possible, and walk near the curb.

Six Street Robbery “Hot Spots”

Based on data over the last three years

1. **CENTRAL SQUARE**, specifically the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Washington and

Street Robberies throughout the City, 2003

